



Earth Team Spotlight

The SC Conservation Partnership salutes Earth Team volunteers who dedicate time and effort to carry out the conservation mission. The following success stories are great examples of how Earth Team volunteers make a difference each and every day for the protection of our state's natural resources.

Earth Team Volunteer Creates Identity for SC RC&D Council

Armed with a laptop and a fancy Power Point presentation, University of South Carolina art student and Earth Team volunteer Joey Ayer presented the results of his logo creation project. Ayer was recruited to assist the East Piedmont Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council in creating its own identity—specifically in the form of a logo. East Piedmont RC&D Coordinator Reginald Hall



East Piedmont RC&D Coordinator Reginald Hall (left) and Earth Team volunteer Joey Ayer worked together to design a logo for the East Piedmont RC&D Council.

knew that he wanted a logo to use on letterhead, on a new website, and on other promotional items for his council such as shirts and hats. This February, Ayer unveiled the final results of his research and artistic design. He presented a series of logos to NRCS Public Affairs Specialist Amy O. Maxwell and Hall. Upon seeing the logos, Hall knew he made a wise choice to use a volunteer to design a logo.

"I was really impressed with how much background research Joey put into finding out what RC&D and NRCS are all about so that he could create

a logo that reflected our mission," said Hall. "It was hard to choose between all the variations that he showed us, because they were all great." Ayer created three logos—one with a professional feel, one with an environmental slant, and then a third logo with a mix of both. One logo was chosen which will then be presented to the East Piedmont RC&D Council at their next meeting.

Ayer said that he has enjoyed his semester of volunteer work with the RC&D because he can combine his love of the outdoors with graphic design. He previously



SC Earth Team volunteer Joey Ayer created this logo for the RC&D Council.

created signage artwork for the Appalachian Trail, a continuous marked footpath that goes from Katahdin in Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia. His interest in art and computers led him to pursue studies in graphic design. As a senior, Ayer hopes to work for a local design firm that creates products for major motion picture companies. Ayer says that working with the RC&D helped prepare him for what's to come after graduation. "I can work either independently or in a team setting, and I don't mind working against tight deadlines." Sounds like Ayer is ready to tackle anything that he may encounter in the corporate world.

"This has been a win-win situation for everyone involved," explained Hall. "I think Joey has learned from this experience, as well as gained college credit for his efforts. But, the Earth Team and RC&D have also really gained a lot from his professionalism, creativity, and dedication to completing this task."

Hall is looking forward to presenting his council with the logo design. He also said that he will work with the USC art department to utilize a different Earth Team

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-Reginald Hall, East Piedmont RC&D Coordinator

volunteer each semester. The next volunteer will focus primarily on designing and programming an East Piedmont RC&D website. "I am looking forward to establishing our presence not only through the continued use of our logo, but also on the internet," said Hall.

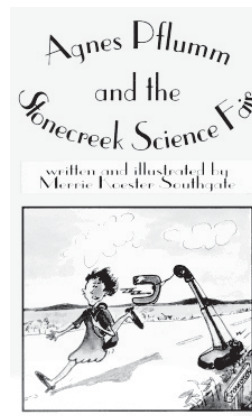
Thanks to Ayer, the East Piedmont RC&D now has its own graphic identification in the form of a logo. Ayer is a great example of how Earth Team volunteers can help promote conservation and create a lasting image.

Earth Team--20 Years of Service

South Carolina Earth Team Volunteer Authors Children's Books on Environmental Issues

Merrie Southgate from South Carolina does triple duty as an Earth Team Volunteer, author of children's science books, and middle school science teacher at Mason Preparatory School in Charleston, SC. Southgate recently spent a day in the field with NRCS District Conservationist Ann Christie to learn more about how our natural resources are protected so that she can get the message out to her readers.

Through her novels, which feature a slightly goofy science teacher named Agnes Pflumm (who some claim is rather like Southgate herself!), she teaches kids in grades 4-8 about science and the world around them. Many teachers are raving about her first book, *Agnes Pflumm and the Stonecreek Science Fair*, which they



use to teach students how to do science fairs without pain. Skillfully combining science with literature, Southgate's main character, Agnes Pflumm, totally hates science fairs; however the only job she could find was one that required her to take the 6th graders at Stonecreek Middle through their first-ever projects. In the end, she actually learns to appreciate the process as much or more than her students!

Southgate's second book, *No Place Like Periwinkle*, is a prequel to the first, and is set at the beginning of Agnes's adolescence in her home, Periwinkle Island, a barrier island modeled after Folly Beach in South Carolina. In this book, she puts a strong emphasis on learning science through observation of the world around us. Southgate said, "Many teachers use this book as part of their South Carolina ecology curriculum, especially before they visit the SC Aquarium."

Presently, she is beginning work on the sequel to book one, which will be titled *Pond Scum and Agnes Pflumm*. Its main theme is that of non-point source pollution of watersheds, and that's where NRCS plays a role. "Last summer I spent a few days with Ann Christie



Merrie Southgate, an Earth Team volunteer in Lancaster, SC, used her volunteer experience with NRCS to write a series of children's conservation books.

and her husband Dick (who works for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) at the fisheries office in Rock Hill." She added, "Dick brought me up to speed on factors which might decrease aquatic species diversity and Ann has given me some fascinating insight into the sheer engineering strategies that turkey farmers must employ in order to ensure proper waste management," she said. "I have NEVER seen so many turkeys in my life!"

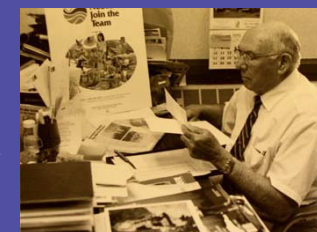
Southgate is very excited about her partnership with NRCS and is hoping to continue her learning process as an Earth Team volunteer in an effort to learn more about waste management, watershed management, and other natural resource issues. "It is my hope that my next book will bring about an awareness in a whole generation of young readers to more thoughtfully consider their actions and those of the communities of

which they are a part."



An Amazing SC Earth Team Volunteer Makes History

The late M.J. Rhodes, former Earth Team volunteer in the Greenwood Field Office, is reputed to have donated the most hours of any Earth Team volunteer upon his retirement from volunteer service in 1996. Caroline Grant, NRCS administrative assistant and former Earth Team coordinator, surveyed



M.J. Rhodes contributed nearly 12,000 hours of service to SC's Earth Team.

other states to see if any volunteers could top Rhodes' 11,771 hours. Nobody could beat it, so it looks like South Carolina's Earth Team has one for the record books. Rhodes worked as an Education Coordinator with three school districts, a district Youth Board, and seventeen garden clubs. NRCS salutes Rhodes for his time and devotion to SC's Earth Team. He is truly an inspiration.

Celebrating 20 years of service and lasting friendships....



What the Earth Team Means to the SC Conservation Partnership...



"For 20 years, the Earth Team has been an excellent way to get South Carolina's citizens involved in conservation, and help them to realize that they can have a positive impact on the health of our soil and water resources. The Earth Team is also a great way to teach people about the mission of NRCS and what our employees do.

I believe the Earth Team is one of our most important outreach tools."

—Amy O. Maxwell, NRCS Public Affairs Specialist, Columbia, SC

"Our Earth Team volunteers feel they are making a difference through conservation and enjoy giving something back to Mother Nature."

—Debbie Eckard, District Education Coordinator, Charleston, SC

"The Earth Team is a valuable asset to our agency, helping us to promote conservation, as well as put conservation on the ground."

—Bob Bowie, District Conservationist, Edgefield, SC

"In a world of deadlines and time frames, the dedication of our volunteers helps us to achieve many goals that may otherwise go lacking."

—Ann Christie, District Conservationist, Lancaster, SC

"Earth Team volunteers are priceless. Through their efforts, we are able to accomplish more with fewer resources in the way of protecting our natural resources."

—Dave Demarest, Foothills RC&D Coordinator, Greenville, SC

"Earth Team volunteers bring a rich diversity of experience and enthusiasm to NRCS's conservation efforts. Although they range in age from teenagers to the elderly, they share one thing in common--They all have a love for our natural resources and environment and are genuinely interested in making a positive difference."

—Lynette Savereno, District Conservationist, Florence, SC

For more information, visit www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/volunteers.html

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Earth Team

Volunteers in South Carolina

Celebrating 20 Years of Service



EARTH TEAM
VOLUNTEERS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Making a difference across the state everyday....

